

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02  
SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 /079 W  
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AMEMBASSY NICOSIA  
AMCONSUL ADANA  
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AMCONSUL IZMIR  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 7336

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, TU  
SUBJ: RECENT DOMESTIC POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. SUMMARY: WHILE PUBLIC ATTENTION HAS BEEN FOCUSED ELSEWHERE, DOMESTIC POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS HAVE CONTINUED APACE. THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP), SUFFERING FROM INTERNAL DISSENT, HELD AN APPARENTLY INCONCLUSIVE SMALL PARTY CONGRESS. RPP LEADER ECEVIT'S LACKLUSTER PERFORMANCE AS PARTY CHAIRMAN HAS DISAPPOINTED HIS SUPPORTERS. THE JUSTICE PARTY (JP) ALSO HAS INTERNAL PROBLEMS WHICH RESULT PRIMARILY FROM THE PARTY'S COALITION WITH THE EXTREMIST NATIONAL SALVATION PARTY (NSP) AND NATIONALIST ACTION PARTY (NAP). THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HAS REMAINED IN SESSION ALL SUMMER BUT HAS BEEN UNABLE TO ELECT A PRESIDING OFFICER WHICH WOULD PERMIT IT TO PERFORM ITS LEGISLATIVE FUNCTION. NEW EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE IN THE DIRECTION BUT SUCCESS WILL NOT COME EASILY. RECENT RUMORS HAVE SUGGESTED THAT BOTH  
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ECEVIT AND DEMIREL ARE SUFFERING FROM STOMACH ULCERS. ECEVIT MAY B, BUT DEMIREL PROBABLY IS NOT. REGARDLESS, SUCH RUMORS HIGHLIGHT THE KEY ROLE THESE TWO MEN PLAY IN TURKISH POLITICS. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING SEPTEMBER TURKISH PUBLIC ATTENTION WAS DIRECTED AWAY FROM POLITICS TOWARD TURKEY'S FINANCIAL AND ENERGY

CRISES, THE ECONOMIC STABILIZATION MEASURES INTRODUCED BY THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT, THE OUTBREAK OF CHOLERA IN THE MIDDLE EAST, AND THE VISITS OF FONMIN CAGLAYANGIL AND FINACE MINISTER BILGEHAN TO THE U.S. JUDGING FROM THE RELATIVELY LIGHT PRESS COVERAGE ACCORDED TO PARTY POLITICS, THINGS SEEMED FAIRLY CALM. UNDER THE SURFACE, HOWEVER, POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENTS WERE TAKING SHAPE IN THE MAJOR PARTIES.

3. THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) IN DISARRAY:

A. THE RPP, WHICH HAS BEEN FIGHTING WITH ITSELF AS A RESULT OF ITS FAILURE TO WIN THE JUNE ELECTIONS, BEGAN PREPARATIONS FOR THE DECEMBER MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS BY FEUDING ABOUT HOW CANDIDATES SHOULD BE SELECTED. A SOLID RPP WIN IN THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS WOULD DO MUCH TO RESTORE SAGGING PARTY MORALE AND REFURBISH THE IMAGE OF THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE JUNE ELECTION, THE INTERNAL OPPOSITION LED BY FORMER FINANCE MINISTER AND FORMER DEPUTY SEC GEN DENIZ BAYKAL CALLED FOR A PARTY CONGRESS TO CONSIDER POSSIBLE CHANGES IN THE PARTY HIGH COMMAND. PARTY CHAIRMAN ECEVIT, ALTHOUGH NOT DIRECTLY THREATENED BY THE OPPOSITION MOMENT, RESISTED IT AND SUGGESTED INSTEAD A "SMALL CONGRESS" WHICH WOULD NOT HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO CHANGE THE LEADERSHIP.

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B. THE "SMALL CONGRESS", WHICH WAS HELD OCTOBER 1-2, PASSED VERY QUIETLY DESPITE PRE-CONGRESS RUMORS THAT PROMINENT MEMBERS OF THE LEADERSHIP, INCLUDING DEP. SEC GEN HASAN ESAT ISIK AND MUSTAFA USTUNDAG, WERE PLANNING TO RESIGN. TWO REASONS WERE SUGGESTED FOR THE THREATENED RESIGNATIONS: (1) DISAGREEMENT OVER THE METHOD OF SELECTION OF MAYORALTY CANDIDATES, AND (2) A BELIEF THAT THE PRESENT SEC GEN, ORHAN EYUBOGLU, AND THE DEP SEC GEN MOST CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH HIM, ALI TOPUZ, HAVE LOST THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PARTY AND SHOULD BE REPLACED.

C. THE "SMALL CONGRESS" WAS DOMINATED BY ECEVIT AND AVOIDED ANY TRULY CONTENTIOUS ISSUES. NEWSPAPERS WHICH NORMALLY SUPPORT THE RPP DISSIDENT LEFT REPORT OCTOBER 3 THAT THIS GROUP IS DISSATISFIED WITH THE OUTCOME OF THE CONGRESS. THEY WERE APPARENTLY ABLE NEITHER TO FORCE A SHOWDOWN WITH THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP NOR TO RESOLVE THE DISPUTE OVER THE SELECTION OF MAYORALTY CANDIDATES. ALTHOUGH A COMPROMISE ON THIS ISSUE MAY EVENTUALLY EMERGE BETWEEN THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP, WHICH WANTS THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION, AND THE OPPOSITION, WHICH WANTS THE LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS TO PLAY THE PRIMARY ROLE IN CANDIDATE

SELECTIONS, THE OPPOSITION WILL CONTINUE TO CHALLENGE THE  
EYUBOGLU-TOPUZ LEADERSHIP OVERALL.

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AMCONSUL IZMIR  
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4. THE ENIGMA OF ECEVIT: ECEVIT IS THE UNDISPUTED LEADER  
OF THE RPP. MANY VOTERS ARE MORE LOYAL TO HIM THAN TO  
THE RPP.HIS PERFORMANCE AS PARTY CHAIRMAN HAS BEEN  
DISAPPOINTING, HOWEVER. HIS PRECIPITATE CLAIM OF VICTORY  
IN THE JUNE 5 ELECTION TURNED WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN  
CONSIDERED A COMMENDABLE SHOWING INTO APPARENT DEFEAT. HE  
HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO RALLY HIS PARTY FROM THE DEFEAT.  
HE HAS PLAYED HIS OPPOSITION ROLE WITHOU INSPIRATION AND  
HIS OFTEN PETTY EFFORTS AT OPPOSITION MAY HAVE DEMEANDED HIM.  
EVEN SOME OF HIS MOST ARDENT SUPPORTERS ARE CONCERNED BY THE  
QUALITY OF HIS PERFORMANCE.

5. DISCONTENT WITH THE JUSTICE PARTY: THE ECONOMIC  
STABILIZATION MEASURES TAKEN BY THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT ARE  
NOT POLITICALLY POPULAR. MOREOVER, THE DECISION TO TAKE  
THEM IMPLIES A COMMITMENT TO KEEP THE COALITION TOGETHER  
FOR THE LONG HAUL. TO ALREADYDISCONTENTED ELEMENTS IN  
THE JP--THE PROGRESSIVES AND THOS DISAPPOINTED BY  
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BEING LEFT OUT OF THE CABINET--THIS DECISION RANKLES. OPEN DISSENT IS LIMITED, BUT ONE JP DEPUTY HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE LAST WEEK CRITICIZING THE COALITION AND CALLING FOR AN RPP-JP COALITION. ACCORDING TO RUMORS APPEARING IN THE PRESS SEPTEMBER 29, THE GROUP OF MALCONTENTS NUMBERS THIRTY AND INCLUDES DEFMIN BIGIC. DEMIREL IS REPORTED TO BE SUFFICIENTLY CONCERNED BY THE PROBLEM THAT HE IS PLANNING TO SHIFT SOME MINISTERIAL ASSIGNMENTS WITHIN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS.

6. PARLIAMENTARY INCAPACITY: ALTHOUGH NEARLY FOUR MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO ELECT A PRESIDING OFFICER. UNTIL THIS OCCURS, COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS CANNOT BE MADE AND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CANNOT PERFORM ITS LEGISLATIVE FUNCTION. ALTHOUGH THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DID NOT ADJOURN FOR THE SUMMER AS IT TRADITIONALLY DOES, IT WAS EFFECTIVELY ADJOURNED BECAUSE OF MASSIVE ABSENCES. ONLY SEPTEMBER 29, AFTER MORE THAN SIX WEEKS OF FAILURE, DID THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OBTAIN A QUORUM. THE QUORUM DISAPPEARED, HOWEVER, AS SOON AS THE QUESTION OF A PRESIDING OFFICER WAS INTRODUCED. NEVERTHELESS, THE SUMMER VACATION SEASON IS OVER AND ALL PARTIES HAVE DURING THE PAST FEW DAYS ANNOUNCED THAT THEY ARE PREPARED TO DEAL WITH THE QUEST FOR THE ELECTION OF A PRESIDING OFFICER. IT WILL NOT BE AN EASY ONE. THE COALITION PARTNERS HAVE APPARENTLY NOT YET AGREED ON A CANDIDATE, AND EVEN IF THE RPP DID NOT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO PLAY A SPOILING ROLE, THE SEARCH FOR AN ACCEPTABLE CANDIDATE WOULD BE DIVISIVE.

7. RUMORS OF HEALTH PROBLEMS: DURING RECENT WEEKS UNSUBSTANTIATED STORIES HAVE CROPPED UP SUGGESTING BOTH ECEVIT AND DEMIREL ARE SUFFERING FROM STOMACH ULCERS. ECEVIT  
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HAS A HISTORY OF ULCERS AND A RECURRENCE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING IN VIEW OF THE TENSIONS GENERATED BY THE PREPARATIONS FOR AND RESULTS OF THE JUNE ELECTIONS. THE RUMORS ABOUT DEMIREL APPARENTLY RESULT FROM THE FACT THAT HE SPENT NEARLY TWO WEEKS OF SEPTEMBER--A MONTH WHEN IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT DECISIONS WERE BEING TAKEN--ON VACATION. IN THE ABSENCE OF SOLID EVIDENCE, WE ARE INCLINED TO DOUBT THAT DEMIREL HAS A SERIOUS HEALTH PROBLEM, BUT THE RUMORS HAVE SERVED TO REMIND US OF THE FRAGILITY OF THE PRESENT DOMESTIC POLITICAL ARRANGEMENT. THE INCAPACITATION OF EITHER ECEVIT OR DEMIREL WOULD HAVE A PROFOUND EFFECT. BOTH LEADERS HAVE SO COMPLETELY CONSOLIDATED THEIR CONTROL

OF THEIR RESPECTIVE PARTIES THAT THEIR DEPARTURES WOULD SERIOUSLY WEAKEN THE PARTIES. SINCE BECOMING CHAIRMAN OF THE JP IN 1964, DEMIREL HAS CAREFULLY UNDERMINED ANYONE WHO APPEARED TO PRESENT A THREAT TO HIS CONTINUING CHAIRMANSHIP. GIVEN HIS SUCCESS, THERE IS AN APPARENT DEARTH OF POTENTIAL SUCCESSORS STILL ACTIVE IN THE JP. DEMIREL'S DEPARTUER WOULD INTRODUCE A FREE-FOR-ALL WHICH IN THE TURKISH TRADITION WOULD PROBABLY RESULT IN A PARTY SPLIT. THE SITUATION MIGHT EVEN BE WORSE IN THE RPP WHERE THERE IS A MULTIPLICITY OF POTENTIAL SUCCESSORS. (ECEVIT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN AVOIDING THE EMERGENCE OF AN HEIR APPARENT--PORBABLY MINDFUL OF HIS OWN RISE TO POWER-- BUT HE HAS NOT BEEN AS ASSIDUOUS AS DEMIREL IN UNDERCUTTING ALL POTENTIAL SUCCESSORS.) AS IN THE JP, A SINGLE LEADER WOULD EVENTUALLY EMERGE, BUT A PARTY SPLIT WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE PART OF THE COST.

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